

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 SSM-05 PA-02
H-02 SSO-00 SS-15 INR-10 INRE-00 SIG-03 /084 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
S/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----111354 040249Z /61

O 040140Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USCINCEUR
DOD
JCS
CIA
USIA
NSC

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MARCH 3

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MARCH 3,
1978. FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

Q. DO YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE ANYTHING ON LEBANON?

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A. WE HAVE NOTED AN INCREASE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS IN
FIGHTING NEAR BINT JUBAYL BETWEEN PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST
FORCES AND CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. WE HAVE NO INDICATION
THAT THERE HAS BEEN ANY ISRAELI INVOLVEMENT. WE CONTINUE
TO WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND TO URGE RESTRAINT
ON ALL PARTIES.

Q. THERE WAS A REPORT TODAY THAT INDICATED THAT SYRIANS
WERE BACKING UP THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON
AGAINST LEBANESE TROOPS IN THE AREA.

A. I DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT.

Q. SENATOR CHURCH HAS POINTED OUT THAT IN THE MEMO OF
AGREEMENT THAT ACCOMPANIED THE SINAI II ACCORD, THE
UNITED STATES, IN HIS WORDS, "IS RESOLVED TO CONTINUE

TO MAINTAIN ISRAEL'S DEFENSIVE STRENGTH THROUGH THE
SUPPLY OF ADVANCED TYPES OF EQUIPMENT SUCH AS THE F-16
AIRCRAFT."

SENATOR CHURCH HAS ALSO NOTED THAT IN 1975 THE U.S.
MADE A COMMITMENT TO SELL ISRAEL 50 F-15S, AND MY QUESTION
IS: DOES THE SECRETARY BELIEVE THAT THE SENATOR WILL
SIMPLY ACQUIESCE TO THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S
THREAT TO BREAK THESE PROMISES IF THEY DON'T APPROVE
F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA AND F-5E'S TO EGYPT?

A. I'M NOT SURE I KNOW THE PRECISE QUESTION.

Q. WELL, IN VIEW OF THE COMMITMENT MADE TO ISRAEL, DOES THE SECRETARY REALLY THINK THAT THE SENATE IS GOING TO ACQUIESCE TO THE THREAT TO BREAK THESE PROMISES TO ISRAEL IF WE DON'T GIVE THEM ALL THOSE FIGHTERS TO SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT?

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A. I DON'T THINK IT'S A QUESTION OF ACQUIESCENCE. I BELIEVE THE SECRETARY BELIEVES THAT CONGRESS WILL UPON REFLECTION APPROVE THE SALE OF THE AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL, TO SAUDI ARABIA, AND TO EGYPT.

Q. WHEN ISRAEL AGREED TO MAKE SUCH CONCESSIONS AS WITHDRAWING FROM THE MITLA AND GIDDI PASSES AND FROM THE ABU RUDEIS OIL FIELDS, WAS THERE ANY MENTION AT ALL IN THE ACCOMPANYING U.S. PROMISE TO PROVIDE ISRAEL ADVANCED AIRCRAFT, THAT SUCH PLANES WOULD BE APPROVED ONLY IF EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA WERE PROVIDED SIMILAR AIRCRAFT?

A. WE ARE OPERATING AT TWO PROBLEMS HERE. THE FIRST IS THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL AND SPECIFICALLY TO WHATEVER IT NEEDS TO MAINTAIN ITS SECURITY WAS NOT OFFERED, IS NOT MAINTAINED IN THE FORM OF A BRIBE IN RETURN FOR CERTAIN ACTIONS.

Q. A BRIBE?

A. A PAYMENT, OR IN SOME WAY A QUID PRO QUO. IT IS AN UNDERTAKING WE HAVE HAD FOR A LONG TIME PRIOR TO '75 AND AFTER '75. SO TO SAY THAT THERE HAS TO BE SOME KIND OF DIRECT CONNECTION, THE ONLY REASON THAT WE WOULD BE DOING ANYTHING FOR ISRAEL'S DEFENSE NEEDS IS BECAUSE OF SOMETHING THAT WAS OR WASN'T DONE IN THE SINAI IN '75 IS SIMPLY WRONG.

Q. WE PUT IT IN THE MEMORANDUM, DIDN'T WE?

A. A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, WHICH I ASSUME YOU'RE QUOTING FROM REPEATED A LONGSTANDING UNITED STATES
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POLICY.

Q. FOR NOT JUST THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL BUT FOR ADVANCED AIRCRAFT.

A. "SUCH AS" -- "SUCH AS." THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC COMMITMENT TO ANYTHING. IT WAS "SUCH AS."

Q. THEN MY QUESTION IS: WAS THERE ANY PROVISION IN THAT THAT THE PROVISION OF ADVANCED AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL WOULD BE INCUMBENT UPON CONGRESS APPROVING SIMILARLY ADVANCED AIRCRAFT TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA?

A. WE BELIEVE THAT, (1), THE COMMITMENT WE MADE WAS MADE IN GOOD FAITH AND WE INTEND TO TRY TO HONOR IT. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE NECESSITY OF THE TWO NATIONS TO WHOM WE ARE ALSO OFFERING ARMS IS REAL AND WE HAVE MADE A GOOD-FAITH OFFER TO THEM. BUT WE ARE PUTTING THEM TOGETHER BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT ALL THREE OF THEM SHOULD GO FORWARD BOTH BECAUSE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING AN OVERALL BALANCE; SECOND, BECAUSE IT IS IN THE IMMEDIATE INTERESTS OF ALL THREE THAT THEY GO FORWARD NOW.

Q. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU THINK THAT SENATOR CHURCH'S VERY SERIOUSLY EXPRESSED CONCERN HERE IS UNFOUNDED; IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

A. I THINK THAT THE SECRETARY HAS SPOKEN TO THIS SUBJECT. I APPRECIATE THE CONCERNS OF A NUMBER OF SENATORS ABOUT THE ENTIRE QUESTION OF ARMS TO THE MIDDLE EAST; THE ADMINISTRATION DOES. I'M SIMPLY RESTATING OUR POSITION.

Q. SENATOR STONE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MIDDLE EAST SUBCOMMITTEE, HAS QUESTIONED THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S UNCLASSIFIED

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CLAIM THAT THE SAUDIS NEED THE F-15S TO PROTECT THEIR OIL FIELDS. THE SENATOR NOTES THAT THE TABUK AIR BASE, LESS THAN A HUNDRED MILES FROM ELATH, IN HIS WORDS "IS MORE THAN 800 MILES FROM SAUDI ARABIA'S CLOSEST OIL FIELD." AND MY QUESTION IS: PRESUMING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT REGARDS SENATOR STONE'S QUESTION AS DESERVING A RESPONSE, WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ANSWER?

A. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACILITIES WHICH SAUDI ARABIA HAS FOR ITS DEFENSE. ONE OF THEM HAPPENS TO BE AT TABUK. THERE ARE OTHERS; THEY ARE PLACED IN MANY PARTS OF THAT COUNTRY. I HAVE NOT YET SEEN IT PUT FORWARD BY ANYBODY THAT THE ONLY WAY YOU DEFEND A POSITION IS WITH THE FACILITY IMMEDIATELY IN THE ENVIRONS OF THAT POSITION, THAT A FACILITY WILL SOMETIMES BE BETTER DEFENDED BY DEFENDING AT YOUR BORDER RATHER THAN INLAND -- WHEREEVER IT MAY BE.

NOW, THAT IS NOT THE ONLY PLACE THAT THE SAUDIS INTEND TO HAVE A DEFENSE, OR HAVE A DEFENSE FACILITY, AND IN FACT THEY DO HAVE FACILITIES AROUND AND NEAR THEIR OIL FIELDS AS WELL.

Q. YES. THERE'S ONE THAT'S TEN MINUTES AWAY FROM JERUSALEM.

A. IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD, A LOT OF PLACES ARE TEN MINUTES AWAY FROM EACH OTHER, AND THAT HAPPENS TO RUN TRUE IN ALL DIRECTIONS. I OBSERVE YOUR FAMILIARITY WITH THE GEOGRAPHY, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT POINT THAT MAKES.

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Q. YOU SAID A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO THAT ANY SALE OF MIRAGE F-1 JETS TO EGYPT WAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN THE DECISION WAS MADE ON SELLING THE F-15S TO THE SAUDIS AND THE F-5S; AND WHEN SENATOR STONE ASKED THE SECRETARY ABOUT THAT YESTERDAY, THE SECRETARY SAID HE COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING OR DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE --

A. NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT HE SAID. AS A MATTER OF FACT, WHAT HE SAID IN HIS TESTIMONY WAS THAT HE COULD NOT GO ANY FURTHER IN DISCUSSING IT BECAUSE THE NEWS REPORTS SEEMED TO SUGGEST THAT IT WASN'T GOING FORWARD ANY MORE. HE WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE FACT THAT THOSE POSSIBLE JET SALES DID NOT AFFECT THE SALE OF THE F-5S TO EGYPT, SINCE THEY WERE DIFFERENT PLANES INTENDED FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF PURPOSES. HE SAID QUITE A BIT ON THAT SUBJECT, AS A MATTER OF FACT, WHEN SENATOR STONE ASKED HIM THE QUESTION.

Q. DOES THE SECRETARY BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL WILL DEPEND ON AND BELIEVE IN FUTURE U.S. PROMISES IF WE NOW UNILATERALLY ADD SO MUCH TO THE PROMISE ON WHICH THEY WITHDREW FROM THE PASSES IN THE OIL FIELD?

Q. WHAT I'M TELLING YOU AGAIN IS I DO NOT KNOW ABOUT A QUID PRO QUO. OUR BASIC PROMISE TO THEM, AS EXPRESSED IN THAT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, IS THAT WE WILL PROVIDE -- AND YOU READ IT TO ME CORRECTLY, THAT PARTICULAR PHRASE, THOUGH YOU ALSO KNOW YOU READ ONLY A PORTION OF IT -- AND THAT COMMITMENT REMAINS.

IN THAT COMMITMENT, THAT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, THERE WAS NO ITEMIZATION, THERE WAS NO NUMBERS -- THERE WAS NO ANYTHING. THERE WAS A COMMITMENT TO THEIR NEED FOR ADVANCED EQUIPMENT. THAT COMMITMENT REMAINS. SINCE 1974, SEVEN BILLION DOLLARS' WORTH OF COMMITMENT

HAS BEEN MAINTAINED TO ISRAEL.
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Q. ARE YOU SERIOUSLY SUGGESTING THAT IF THE ISRAELIS
THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE GOING TO GIVE 60 F-15S TO THE
SAUDI ARABIANS AND ALL THOSE F-5E'S TO THE
EGYPTIANS THAT THEY WOULD HAVE PULLED OUT FROM THOSE
ADVANCED POSITIONS WHOSE POSITION YOU'VE JUST JUSTIFIED
BY REFERENCE TO SAUDI ARABIAN AIR BASES?

A. I HAVE NO WAY OF DOING THAT.

Q. DOESN'T THIS SERIOUSLY SUGGEST ITSELF AS SOMETHING
OF AN ADDED -- A KIND OF A HIDDEN AGENDA THAT WAS
ADDED LATER? MAYBE IT WASN'T HIDDEN THEN, BUT IT'S BEEN
ADDED TO IT NOW? YOU MADE A COMMITMENT. ISRAEL MADE
CONCESSIONS TO EGYPT BY WITHDRAWING. YOU MADE A
COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THEM. YOU DIDN'T SAY ONE SINGLE
THING ABOUT ALL OF THESE FIGHTER PLANES EXCEPT THAT
CANDIDATE CARTER MADE VERY STRONG COMMITMENTS ABOUT
NOT SUPPLYING EGYPT.

A. CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE. THE COMMITMENT THAT WE HAVE
MADE TO ISRAEL REMAINS. I WANT YOU TO CATCH BOTH PARTS
OF THAT.

2. FOLLOWING WAS POSTED IN PRESS OFFICE IN RESPONSE
TO QUESTION TAKEN MARCH 2.

Q. WILL THERE BE ANY DELAY IN THE SUBMISSION OF THE
FORMAL LETTERS OF OFFER TO CONGRESS OF THE PLANE PACKAGE?

A. IN HIS TESTIMONY 2 MARCH 1978 BEFORE THE SENATE
FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, THE SECRETARY AGREED TO
MEET WITH THE COMMITTEE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EASTER
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RECESS AND PRIOR TO THE FORMAL NOTIFICATION. CHRISTOPHER
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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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